

**QUEENSLAND UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY
RESEARCH STUDENTS CENTRE**

**CONTINUING SURVEY OF POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH
STUDENTS**

2004 REPORT

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Executive Summary

290 continuing Research Higher Degree students responded to the first online continuing survey delivered by the Research Students Centre in September 2004. Of the total respondents 55% were female and 16% were international students. All faculties of the University were represented in responses received.

242 (83%) of respondents indicated that their Faculty provided an intellectually stimulating environment. 4 of the 290 students strongly disagreed with this statement being from the faculties of Business, BEE, Education and Science.

228 (79%) of respondents indicated that they had appropriate equipment and facilities are made available to them. 7 students strongly disagreed with this statement of whom 3 were from Health and one each from Education, BEE, Business and CIRAC.

216 (74%) of respondents indicated that they were happy with the quality of equipment and facilities. 8 strongly disagreed with the statement including 3 from Health and one from Education, BEE, Information Technology, Science and CIRAC.

210 (72%) of respondents indicated that a suitable workspace was available to them. Five strongly disagreed with this statement including 3 from Health and one each from Business and CIRAC.

240 (83%) of respondents indicated that they had received good guidance in topic selection and refinement. 9 strongly disagreed with this statement including 2 each from Education, Health and Business and one each from Information Technology, Science and CIRAC.

247 (85%) of respondents indicated that they were satisfied with the quality of supervision they received. Eight respondents strongly disagreed with this statement including 2 each from Education, Health, Business and one each from Science and CIRAC.

266 (91%) of the respondents indicated that their research was improving their general skills and abilities. Three strongly disagreed with this statement including one each from Education, Health and Business.

243 (84%) of respondents indicated that they were satisfied with the quality of feedback received about their work. Seven strongly disagreed with this statement including two each from Education and Business and one each from Health, Science and CIRAC.

231 (80%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their expectations about their work and rate of progress were made clear to them. Seven strongly disagreed with this statement including 2 each from Education and Business and one each from BEE, Science and CIRAC.

140 (48%) agreed or strongly agreed that they were well informed about the available opportunities to gain international experience during their studies. This category attracted the most disagreement with 20 (7%) of the respondents strongly disagreeing with the statement.

244 (84%) of respondents were overall, satisfied with the quality of their higher degree research experience. Nine students strongly disagreed with this statement

including 3 from Health, two each from Business and BEE and one each from Education and CIRAC.

In terms of open comments a summary of all responses by category is provided below;

	Positive	Negative
Supervision	17	10
Infrastructure	2	17
Course Structure	4	5
Culture	6	8
Experience	15	5
Part Time Experience		7
O/S opportunities	1	9

Recommendations

There are three recommendations made on the basis of the feedback from this survey:

Recommendation 1 Infrastructure Support

RSC will work with Faculties to ensure that advice to new students regarding infrastructure support is provided. Further RTCG members will be asked to confirm that the Infrastructure requirements as set out in the QUT Quality Assurance statement are addressed. It is noted that the request for air conditioning for student work areas has been made previously and follow up on this matter will be considered.

Recommendation 2

The continuing student survey will be reviewed to confirm that questions relevant to Part time and external students are included. Consideration of the needs of these students for access to resources and training will also be a point for discussion among RTCG and RDC members.

Recommendation 3

RTCG and RDC will give further consideration to articulating a clear set of expectations in terms of the provision of resources guidance and planning support for students to ensure that they can determine reasonable strategies to ensure that they can access at least one opportunity to engage with researchers in their field in an international context. This may be achieved through the provision of Grant in Aid funding, workshops from visiting Professors, or a workshop focusing on exchange opportunities, strategic use of the Access Grid Node facilities etc.

Introduction

This report is concerned with determining the quality of supervision, administrative and technical services, infrastructure and support services available to postgraduate research students. The cohort of current students as at September 2004 was invited to respond to this survey.

In September, emails were sent to 1150 students inviting them to complete the survey online via QUT Virtual. 290 (25%) respondents completed the questionnaire over a three week period.

Aims

The main aim of this survey is to ascertain the standard and quality of a variety of services/facilities/support mechanisms, which are seen to influence the experiences of postgraduate students while at QUT.

This survey was also conducted in an effort to obtain constructive feedback that would allow the University to maintain and improve its level of client service to this important and growing cohort.

Survey Responses

Of the 1150 questionnaires sent out, 290 questionnaires were returned yielding a response rate of 25 per cent.

Structure of the Report

The report was structured according to the responses provided to the survey questions. The results are summarised in tabular form. Comments and results have been sorted into faculty groups.

Results

Demographic Information

Gender and Name Disclosure

A total of 290 (100%) respondents 159 were females (55%) and 131 were males (45%).

Age Groupings

TABLE 1: Age Groupings and Gender with each Faculty.

FACULTY	SEX	-25	26 - 35	36 - 45	46 +	Grand Total
Education	F		7	14	12	33
	M			3	9	12
Total			7	17	21	45
BEE	F	4	1	4		9
	M	11	16	6	5	38
Total		15	17	10	5	47
Health	F	8	17	15	5	45
	M	1	1	5		7
Total		9	18	20	5	52
Info Tech	F	1	2	1	1	5
	M	4	7	5	5	21

Total		5	9	6	6	26
Law	F	1	1		1	3
Total		1	1		1	3
Business	F	3	4	2	3	12
	M	1	4	4	1	10
Total		4	8	6	4	22
Science	F	8	10	1	2	21
	M	11	10	4	3	28
Total		19	20	5	5	49
CIRAC	F	1	7	6	5	19
	M	2	4	3	3	12
Total		3	11	9	8	31
Carseldine	F	1	3	5	3	12
	M		2		1	3
Total		1	5	5	4	15
Grand Total		57	96	78	59	290

Residency status

45 (16%) of respondents were identified as being international students. The remaining 245 (84%) would have been Research Training Scheme eligible candidates.

Course Type by Faculty

TABLE 2: Course within each Faculty.

FACULTY_CD	DOCTORATE	MASTERS	Grand Total
Education	40	5	45
BEE	36	11	47
Health	45	7	52
Info Tech	21	5	26
Law	3		3
Business	12	10	22
Science	42	7	49
CIRAC	20	11	31
Carseldine	12	3	15
Grand Total	231	59	290

Response to Questions

Students were asked to evaluate 10 using the following range of possible responses:

- (1) Strongly Disagree
- (2) Disagree
- (3) Neither
- (4) Agree
- (5) Strongly Agree
- (6) N/A – blank

Responses by Faculty are provided below.

1 My Faculty provides an intellectually stimulating environment.

242 (83%) of respondents indicated that their Faculty provided an intellectually stimulating environment. 4 of the 290 students strongly disagreed with this statement being from the faculties of Business, BEE, Education and Science.

FACULTY_CD	1	2	3	4	5	6	Grand Total
Education	1	2	3	21	17	1	45
BEE	1	2	1	28	15		47
Health		3	6	29	14		52
Info Tech		1	2	13	10		26
Law			1	1	1		3
Business	1	1	3	11	6		22
Science	1	2	6	25	12	3	49
CIRAC		3		16	12		31
Carseldine		2	2	7	4		15
Grand Total	4	16	24	151	91	4	290

2 Appropriate equipment and facilities are made available to me.

228 (79%) of respondents indicated that they had appropriate equipment and facilities are made available to them. 7 students strongly disagreed with this statement of whom 3 were from Health and one each from Education, BEE, Business and CIRAC.

FACULTY_CD	1	2	3	4	5	6	(blank)	Grand Total
Education	1	2	7	25	8	2		45
BEE	1	1	5	28	11		1	47
Health	3	4	4	26	12	2	1	52
Info Tech		2	2	8	14			26
Law			1	1	1			3
Business	1	1	2	6	9	2	1	22
Science		3	5	28	11	2		49
CIRAC	1		3	14	12		1	31
Carseldine		1		7	7			15
Grand Total	7	14	29	143	85	8	4	290

3 I am happy with the quality of equipment and facilities.

216 (74%) of respondents indicated that they were happy with the quality of equipment and facilities. 8 strongly disagreed with the statement including 3 from Health and one from Education, BEE, Information Technology, Science and CIRAC.

FACULTY_CD	1	2	3	4	5	6	(blank)	Grand Total
Education	1	2	7	23	8	3	1	45
BEE	1	2	6	26	11	1		47
Health	3	5	6	24	11	3		52
Info Tech	1	3	2	10	10			26
Law			1	1	1			3
Business		3	1	8	7	3		22
Science	1	6	4	31	5	2		49

CIRAC	1	1	3	14	12			31
Carseldine		1		9	5			15
Grand Total	8	23	30	146	70	12	1	290

4 A suitable workspace is made available to me.

210 (72%) of respondents indicated that a suitable workspace was available to them. Five strongly disagreed with this statement including 3 from Health and one each from Business and CIRAC.

FACULTY_CD	1	2	3	4	5	6	(blank)	Grand Total
Education		4	6	15	10	10		45
BEE		2	1	22	19	2	1	47
Health	3	7	5	21	12	4		52
Info Tech			3	8	11	4		26
Law			1	1	1			3
Business	1	1	3	8	6	3		22
Science		1	1	22	21	3	1	49
CIRAC	1	2	4	12	10	2		31
Carseldine			2	6	5	2		15
Grand Total	5	17	26	115	95	30	2	290

5 I received good guidance in my topic selection and refinement.

240 (83%) of respondents indicated that they had received good guidance in topic selection and refinement. 9 strongly disagreed with this statement including 2 each from Education, Health and Business and one each from Information Technology, Science and CIRAC.

FACULTY_CD	1	2	3	4	5	6	(blank)	Grand Total
Education	2	2	2	15	23	1		45
BEE		1	2	25	18	1		47
Health	2	3	7	20	20			52
Info Tech	1		1	15	9			26
Law			1	1	1			3
Business	2		1	7	10		2	22
Science	1	4	3	19	19	2	1	49
CIRAC	1	3	3	11	13			31
Carseldine		1		8	6			15
Grand Total	9	14	20	121	119	4	3	290

6 I am satisfied with the quality of supervision I am receiving.

247 (85%) of respondents indicated that they were satisfied with the quality of supervision they received. Eight respondents strongly disagreed with this statement including 2 each from Education, Health, Business and one each from Science and CIRAC.

FACULTY_CD	1	2	3	4	5	6	(blank)	Grand Total
Education	2	1		13	28	1		45
BEE			2	20	25			47

Health	2	4	6	14	26			52
Info Tech		2		12	12			26
Law			1	1	1			3
Business	2		4	7	9			22
Science	1	3	5	17	23			49
CIRAC	1	1	3	10	15		1	31
Carseldine			1	6	8			15
Grand Total	8	11	22	100	147	1	1	290

7 My research is improving my general skills and abilities.

266 (91%) of the respondents indicated that their research was improving their general skills and abilities. Three strongly disagreed with this statement including one each from Education, Health and Business.

FACULTY_CD	1	2	3	4	5	6	(blank)	Grand Total
Education	1		2	14	26	1	1	45
BEE			1	24	22			47
Health	1	1	4	23	23			52
Info Tech			5	11	10			26
Law				2	1			3
Business	1		1	8	12			22
Science			1	25	22		1	49
CIRAC			3	13	15			31
Carseldine				9	6			15
Grand Total	3	1	17	129	137	1	2	290

8 I am satisfied with the quality of feedback I receive about my work.

243 (84%) of respondents indicated that they were satisfied with the quality of feedback received about their work. Seven strongly disagreed with this statement including two each from Education and Business and one each from Health, Science and CIRAC.

FACULTY_CD	1	2	3	4	5	6	(blank)	Grand Total
Education	2	1	1	20	20	1		45
BEE		1	5	29	12			47
Health	1	4	4	21	22			52
Info Tech		1	2	17	6			26
Law			1	1	1			3
Business	2	1	1	9	9			22
Science	1	2	8	25	12		1	49
CIRAC	1	3	2	15	10			31
Carseldine			1	8	6			15
Grand Total	7	13	25	145	98	1	1	290

9 Expectations about my work and rate of progress are made clear to me.

231 (80%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their expectations about their work and rate of progress were made clear to them. Seven strongly disagreed with this statement including 2 each from Education and Business and one each from BEE, Science and CIRAC.

FACULTY_CD	1	2	3	4	5	6	Grand Total
Education	2	3	1	24	14	1	45
BEE	1	1	6	27	12		47
Health		7	2	28	15		52
Info Tech		2	3	15	6		26
Law			2	1			3
Business	2	5		8	7		22
Science	1	5	6	27	10		49
CIRAC	1	3	2	16	9		31
Carseldine		1	1	6	6	1	15
Grand Total	7	27	23	152	79	2	290

10 I am well informed about the available opportunities to gain international experience during my studies (e.g. Study abroad, student exchanges, study tours, internships).

140 (48%) agreed or strongly agreed that they were well informed about the available opportunities to gain international experience during their studies. This category attracted the most disagreement with 20 (7%) of the respondents strongly disagreeing with the statement.

FACULTY_CD	1	2	3	4	5	6 (blank)	Grand Total
Education	5	10	6	12	7	5	45
BEE	1	9	16	14	5	2	47
Health	2	4	6	24	11	5	52
Info Tech	3	4	9	8	2		26
Law			2		1		3
Business	5	4	2	6	5		22
Science	1	8	16	19	2	2	49
CIRAC	3	9	3	13	3	1	31
Carseldine		2	3	5	3	2	15
Grand Total	20	50	63	101	39	16	290

11 Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of my higher degree research experience.

244 (84%) of respondents were overall, satisfied with the quality of their higher degree research experience. Nine students strongly disagreed with this statement including 3 from Health, two each from Business and BEE and one each from Education and CIRAC.

FACULTY_CD	1	2	3	4	5	6 (blank)	Grand Total
Education	1	2	3	20	16	2	45
BEE	2		3	29	12	1	47
Health	3	3	3	27	16		52
Info Tech		3	1	15	7		26
Law				2	1		3
Business	2	2	2	11	5		22
Science		1	5	36	6	1	49
CIRAC	1	1	1	19	9		31

Carseldine	1	1	8	5				15
Grand Total	9	13	19	167	77	4	1	290

Please provide further comments

202 (70%) of the 290 respondents provided further comments. These are detailed by faculty responses below. Responses were broken down into a number of categories and evaluated as either being positive or negative.

Across the university the breakdown of comments by category was:

	Positive	Negative
Supervision	17	10
Infrastructure	2	17
Course Structure	4	5
Culture	6	8
Experience	15	5
Part Time Experience		7
O/S opportunities	1	9

Following is a breakdown of comments by category and faculty.

Education comments

25 (56%) of the 45 Education respondents provided comments

	Positive	Negative
Supervision	10	1
Infrastructure		5
Course Structure		2
Culture	1	2
Experience	4	1
Part Time Experience		4
O/S opportunities		4

BEE comments

13 (28%) of the 47 BEE respondents provided comments

One student expressed concern about the 3 year time frame being too short.

	Positive	Negative
Supervision	2	2
Infrastructure	1	2
Course Structure	3	1
Culture	1	3
Experience	3	2
Part Time Experience		0
O/S opportunities	1	1

Health comments

20 (38%) of the 52 Health respondents provided comments

One student expressed concern about managing the conflicting roles of staff member and student.

	Positive	Negative
Supervision	3	3
Infrastructure	0	6
Course Structure	0	2
Culture	1	3

Experience	2	2
Part Time Experience		3
O/S opportunities		

Information Technology Comments

4 (15%) of the 26 Information Technology respondents provided comments

	Positive	Negative
Supervision		1
Infrastructure		1
Course Structure		
Culture		
Experience		
Part Time Experience		
O/S opportunities		2

Law comments

0 (0%) of the Law respondents provided comments

Business comments

5 (23%) of the 22 Business respondents provided comments

2 students complemented the Faculty Research Advisor saying Dr Cox provided an excellent service to students. One student was concerned about managing conflicting roles of student and staff member. A comment was made that the survey questions were not as relevant to part time and external students.

Science comments

11 (22%) of the 49 Science respondents provided comments

Two comments that the survey questions were not as relevant to part time and external students. One comment on how valuable the internet and library website was for external students. One call for more research only staff and more time for completion.

	Positive	Negative
Supervision	1	2
Infrastructure	1	1
Course Structure	1	
Culture		
Experience	2	
Part Time Experience		
O/S opportunities		2

CIRAC comments

7 (23%) of the 31 CIRAC respondents provided comments

One person indicated the ethic clearance process required effort.

	Positive	Negative
Supervision	1	1
Infrastructure		1
Course Structure		
Culture	1	
Experience	4	
Part Time Experience		

O/S opportunities		
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Carseldine comments

3 (20%) of the 15 Carseldine respondents provided comments.

	Positive	Negative
Supervision		
Infrastructure		1
Course Structure		
Culture	2	
Experience		
Part Time Experience		
O/S opportunities		

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

This is the first year that the continuing survey has been delivered at QUT. It is based on a similar survey delivered at Curtin University. In the future it is hoped that there can be benchmarking of results of this survey with other ATN Universities.

Form open comments made by students they appreciated the opportunity to make a comment on their candidature. The timing of the delivery of this survey was intended to coincide with the Annual Progress Report Round. Together these two mechanisms hopefully provide a good snap shot of candidate activity. These events are complemented by the Exit Survey which is provided to all completing and discontinuing students.

This is the first time the Research Students Centre has delivered a survey via QUT Virtual. Thanks go to the QUT Virtual team who were able to support this initiative and deliver a user friendly product with speed and efficiency.

Clearly the successful response to survey comments through the recommendations made will act as an incentive to future student's participation in the survey process.